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## **SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS APPLAUDS THE ARREST OF A SUSPECT IN THE UNIQUE RUSSELL JULY FOURTH SHOOTING**

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas is heartened to hear of the arrest of a suspect in the July 4 killing of 14-year-old Unique Russell. The arrest by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies of Michael Staton, a 19-year-old Compton resident and alleged gang member, Friday morning has intensified the search for a second suspect, who is still at large.

"After an intensive six month investigation and hard work on the part of our Sheriff's Deputies it is a relief to see that one of the alleged perpetrators has been caught," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "Although this will not bring back Unique, the arrest is a step toward justice. We look forward to a second arrest in this tragic crime."

On the heels of the shooting in July, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion authored by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas offering a \$10,000 reward to catch the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

According to Sheriff's investigators, the reward was instrumental in providing tips from the public to catch the suspect.

The incident happened in front of a home on the 1300 block of West 97<sup>th</sup> Street as Unique celebrated the holiday with friends, family members, and neighbors at an annual block party.

Unique frequently traveled to the unincorporated West Athens community to visit with family members, who are long-time residents of the community. At approximately 10:20 p.m., Unique, along with two other victims, were struck by gunfire as they watched fireworks.

Witnesses, who initially believed the gunfire to be the sound of fireworks, saw two young men standing on the southeast corner of 97th Street and Normandie Avenue and fire several shots into the crowd.

Unique was transported to Harbor-UCLA Medical Center where she died from her injuries. The two remaining victims suffered non-life threatening gunshot wounds to their legs and were subsequently released.

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